

July 27, 1961

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# 1961

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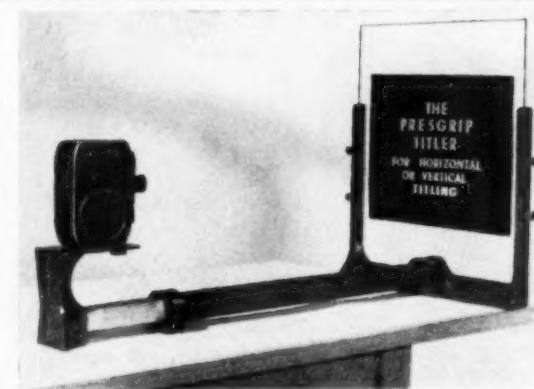
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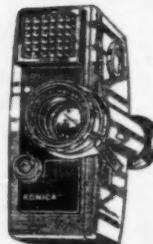
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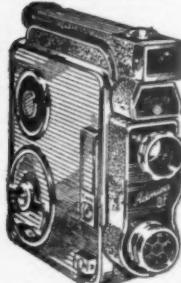
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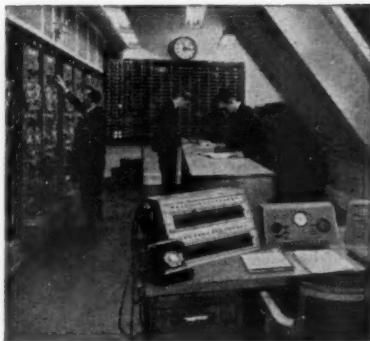
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Here the sound of the mijwiz, an Arabian double-reed pipe, is recorded. Later, it will be treated elec-

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Vol. 2, No. 27  
(Old series Vol. 26, No. 27)  
27 July 1961

Edited by  
**GORDON MALTHOUSE**

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## FILM MAKING TOO MUCH TROUBLE?

MANY AMATEURS will have a fellow feeling for a reader, Mr. H. E. Bunce, whose letter appears in this issue. He protests that amateur film-making is too much of a business and requires the expenditure of too much time. "It depresses me," he writes, "to think that cine cameras are not as good as still cameras for me, and that I must write scripts, do editing and titling and a hundred other things before I become anywhere near a successful photographer."

Our correspondent differs from many who share his views, however, in one important respect: he has taken the trouble to read a number of books — but is dismayed to find that they advise him to get a story into his films and to pay attention to construction. "Why cannot we just remain amateur film-makers and leave the making of feature films, etc., to the budding professionals?"

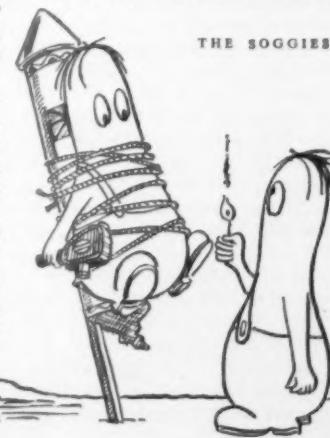
The writers of books on the production of simple family and holiday films have to concentrate on themes and their working out, otherwise there would be precious little for them to write about. And doubtless the cumulative effect of it all does seem formidable to the casual snapshotter who has been used to taking occasional shots with a still camera as the fancy takes him. He does not want to turn the family into actors in a domestic comedy, however unambitious. He wants an unadorned record of them and of the highlights of the domestic year. He will not, therefore, have any use for Proteus's suggestions in this issue. A slight story involving the watering of a lawn, with a descent into slapstick over the collapse of a deck chair, will certainly not find favour with him.

For our part we must confess that we, too, have misgivings over the slapstick, for we have seen too many films in which fathers attempt unsuccessfully to erect deck chairs and ultimately end up on the ground not to feel uneasy about the outcome and its impact on those outside the family circle. But these rudimentary little plots are for those who have got a stage farther than our correspondent — those who have discovered that to use the cine camera purely as a recording instrument on the same people all the time becomes boring both to the man behind it and to the people in front.

If, however, the recording instrument were used properly, there would be no need for these fictional plots. Unadorned domestic episodes and holidays could provide first-rate cine material — but only to the man who has a real feeling for film and can handle the camera superbly. Unfortunately, if he has this skill he will invariably want to turn it to other subjects. The family picture — with all the unhappy technical inadequacies that "baby-on-the-lawn" connotes — does not appeal to him. Yet if only he would accept the challenge he might well produce a picture which, besides giving immense pleasure to the people portrayed, would eclipse in public acclaim the most ambitious Oscar-winning story film.

Since, although he professes disinterest, our correspondent is nevertheless sufficiently keen to read up the subject, he could be one of the first in this most rewarding field, but if he does not aim as high at least he can prove to his own satisfaction and that of the family audience that the cine camera can do much more for him than the still. The more it can give, however, is dependent on the more (continued on page 160)

"For real impact, I'd do most of the shooting on re-entry".





Picture taken with Switar lens and photographed from the screen during projection. Arrow points to portion subsequently enlarged. (Kodachrome II)

A FEW WEEKS AGO, I told you about a test I wanted to make to establish the difference—if any—between the resolving power of a high grade prime lens and a top quality zoom lens. Is there any significant variation in the standard of definition? (By "significant variation," I mean one that would be apparent to a non-expert, average audience.)

In theory, the prime lens should give better definition but, in practice, the superiority might prove to be so marginal that only an expert would be aware of it. I wanted to know the answer—not on the basis of a laboratory test but from the reaction of ordinary people who watch films for pleasure. In any case, it has often been argued that the resolving power of available 8mm. film stock isn't equal to the potentialities of the gauge's top quality lenses, and I would agree that this is the case.

For example, I have one lens which, at f/8, is capable of resolving 80 lines per mm. over most of the picture area . . . but where am I going to find any colour stock that can do justice to it? Or, to put it another way, if a good zoom lens at its various focal lengths is more than a match for the available film stock, why is anybody worried about the alleged deficiencies in the matter of definition?

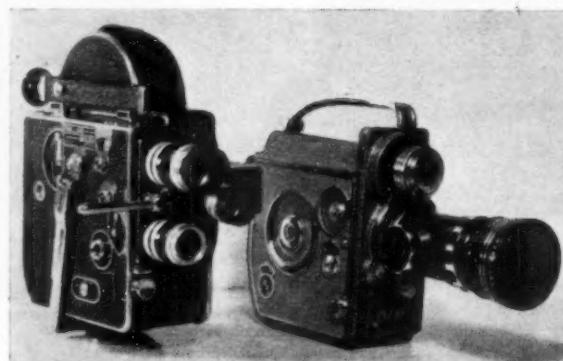
Let us assume, for instance, that an 8mm. colour reversal film is capable, under ideal conditions, of resolving some 35 lines per mm. If your zoom lens has a similar resolving power, it is able to achieve the sharpest possible definition with that particular film stock—and you won't get any better results by using a more potent lens.

Herein, I think, lies the value of a purely subjective test. It may be very satisfying to know that your pet lens is capable of superb definition—but what's the use of a hi-fi set with a frequency range beyond anything the human ear can record? What really matters is audience reaction.

I tried in this experiment to overcome some of the limitations of film resolution by using a reel of Kodachrome

## Zooms v. Prime Lenses

**Is there any significant**  
**IVAN WATSON describes an**

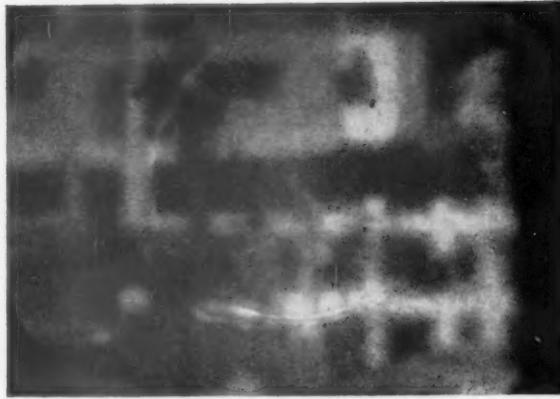
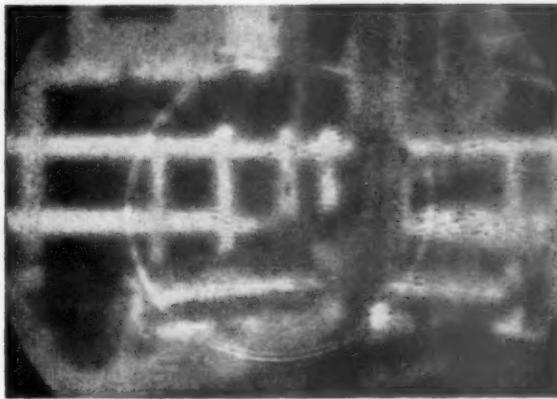


The two cameras used in the definition test—Bolex H8 fitted with Switar lenses, and Nizo Focovario Reflex.

II. To save myself the trouble of finding out experimentally, I asked Kodak if they could give me any idea of the number of lines per mm. that Kodachrome II would resolve when pushed to the limit with a suitable lens. Kodak, wisely, I suppose, declined to make any forecast, on the grounds that there are too many variables and they wouldn't like to commit themselves.

I was in a hurry, so I chanced it. Half the reel was exposed in a Bolex H8 fitted with Switar lenses and the other half in a Nizo Heliomatic fitted with a Schneider Focovario zoom lens. (Both cameras are sprocket-fed). As far as it was possible to make them so, the 24 shots—12 in each camera—were identical . . . same aperture, focal length, subject, distance, exposure, etc., with only a few minutes' interval between each set of shots while the film was being loaded into the second camera. The built-in meter of the Nizo agreed with the Weston, and all the shots were exposed at f/14 in fairly bright sunlight.

When the film came back from the processing station,



(LEFT) Definition under the microscope! This is a  $\times 480$  photomicrograph of the centre portion of the frame, showing the white fence round the jetty. Switar lens. Kodachrome II.

(RIGHT) Another  $\times 480$  photomicrograph of the white fence (zoom lens). Fence is not in quite the same position owing to difficulty of centering the exact portion of the frame in the microscope. Kodachrome II.

## **difference in definition? experiment and its results.**

I cut and spliced the 24 shots with the deliberate intention of confusing anyone who might try to guess which shot had been taken with which camera. Eight guests — none of them experts — were invited to see the film projected on to a 3ft. screen. They each were given a slip of paper bearing the numbers 1 to 24.

I "explained" that two cameras had been used and that one of the cameras had possibly a better lens. I would run the film through once so that they could get a general idea of it, a second time in complete darkness, and a third time with enough light available for them to put "A" or "B" beside each number as I called it out, "A" representing the shot that looked sharper on the screen.

I had to project the film five times before every member of the audience had completed his "report." They certainly entered into the spirit of the exercise, accepting what was virtually a challenge to their eyesight and judgment. *The results, when we checked the papers, proved conclusively that not one member of the audience consistently voted for one lens or the other.* They had no real idea which was which and thought there was little to choose between any of the shots.

I tried the experiment again with several experienced ciné people and they did little better than my "average audience." As one of them said to me, "For all practical purposes, there's no difference in definition. The only marked variation is in colour rendering. One of the lenses is very much 'warmer' and, at a guess, I'd say it was the Switar." He was wrong! The Focovario was the "warm" lens, giving a slight amber tint to skin tones.

So this experiment proved that, on a 3ft. screen, few people can detect any marginal difference in picture sharpness. Yet there was a difference, and a really big blow-up would have revealed it. A  $\times 480$  photomicrograph of a portion of the frame showed that the pictures taken with the Switar lenses were appreciably sharper. I made over a dozen photomicrographs and in every case the Switar lenses scored. This is an encouraging tribute to Koda-

chrome II for it means that *in resolving-power, a colour film has caught up with a good quality zoom lens.*

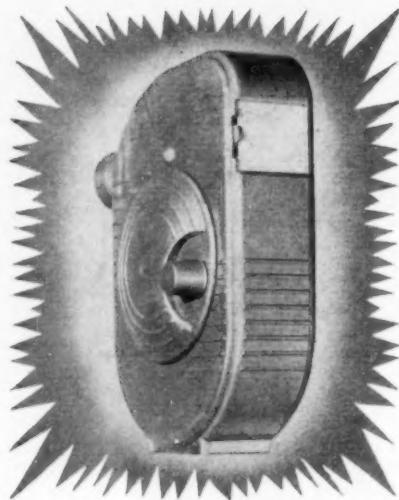
But what are the practical implications? My experiment (which I do not claim to have been more than a rough and ready method of measuring audience reaction to the performance of a zoom lens) suggests that the allegedly inferior resolving power of a zoom lens (as compared with the resolving power of a high-quality prime lens) is of no practical importance if the projected picture is kept to a reasonable size.

I myself was surprised at the consistent sharpness of the pictures taken with the Schneider zoom lens and, at the first showing, could easily have been confounded. When I had seen the film twice, I *thought* that those pictures which had been shot with the Switar lenses were perhaps a little crisper, but I needed a set of photomicrographs to confirm my opinion. If I had used standard Kodachrome, I think it would have been impossible to say that the definition of the prime lenses was better than that of the zoom, for the simple reason that all the lenses (including the zoom) would have been capable of better resolution than the film stock permitted.

For convenience, ease of use, titling, etc., the advantages of a zoom lens are considerable and, frankly, I am astonished to discover that — from an audience's point of view — there is so little difference in the quality of definition. My own conclusion is that if you are thinking in terms of a showing at the N.F.T. you should use a prime lens and a film stock capable of doing it something like justice. But, if you're not worried about really big blow-ups, a good zoom lens will do everything you want it to do.

By all means, amuse yourself as I did — taking umpteen photomicrographs, measuring the fall-off at the edges, and so on — but don't forget that a non-specialist audience is primarily interested in what is happening on the screen and is certainly not "definition conscious" in the way you and I are!

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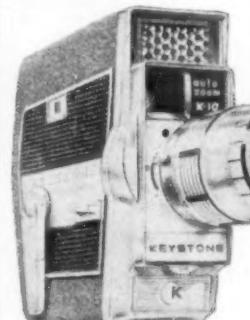
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# Every Family Film

**The subject  
has universal appeal.**

**The problem is:**

**How to present it?**

**Continuing his series  
on creating plots,  
PROTEUS offers some  
suggestions.**

### ABOUT FILMING BABY

- Baby is the world's most natural actor but without some kind of a plot a film of his antics will almost certainly be boringly repetitive to anyone outside the family circle.
- He will be the principal 'actor', but do not build the film entirely round him.
- Take plenty of really close shots of him, cooing, dribbling, smiling, yelling, but remember to shoot a good supply of reaction shots of members of the family.

## is a Potential Winner

ONE DAY, somebody will produce a quite simple film called *Baby on the Lawn*, and it will win an Oscar. I for one shall be delighted when that happens, for it will prove conclusively that a family film, sincerely and competently made, can evoke a warm response from almost any audience. So many domestic pictures never get beyond the moving snapshot stage. Gawping and goosing at the camera, Little Willie may entrance his parents but, unless he is for some reason unique, an unco-ordinated film recording of Willie doing nothing more remarkable than growing up the way most of us do is likely to please only his family.

Your first aim should be to tell a story. A plot of some kind there must be! It will give the film shape — a beginning, a middle and an end. It will sustain interest. As I have stressed throughout this series, to the professional fiction writer the art of plotting is centred around the word "obstacle." If you never forget this magic word, you will easily devise many simple plots effective enough for family films. (Some examples are given in the panel on page 138.)

We begin with a *want*, something to

be achieved, and then we put obstacles in the way of its fulfilment. Let us start our picture with the lawn Father wants to grow. We could show him admiring a neighbour's lawn, looking at catalogue pictures of beautiful green swards. We see him digging and planting seed. Obstacle No. 1 — there's a drought. (Newspaper cutting, *no rain for three weeks*; some shots of the pitiless sun — if you're lucky; withered flowers, etc.). Father fits up a hose with a spray. But baby gets hold of some scissors while mother, seated in a deck chair, is sewing. He jams the scissors into the hose pipe. Spray shoots out, soaking mother in the deck chair, which collapses. Father runs to the rescue and trips over hose. Wrenched from the spray nozzle, the hose snakes all over the garden. Everyone gets soaked. They go indoors to clean themselves up. Then it rains hard!

This modest slapstick is perhaps kindest described as "good, clean fun," but it will delight the unsophisticated, not too critical, audience. It barely has a plot, but almost any plot, however rudimentary, is preferable to a movie snapshot album in which everybody is embarrassed because they have nothing to do.

Now let us consider a story to show junior at his next stage of growth, e.g., No. 5 in the panel. We could begin with the construction of the aeroplane. Either Willie makes it or Father makes it for him. In this case we will assume that the boy is very young, so his Father does the job. Judicious and economic cutting will show the aeroplane gradually taking shape, until the great day when it is presented to Willie; close-up of his expression of rapturous delight.

The boy will certainly want to fly the plane. We can include some pictures of Father having a wonderful time showing him how — and of Willie not getting much of a look in. Then would come the big moment when Willie goes out on his own for his first "solo" flight. The local recrea-



*He can well share the screen with the greatest of stars. As far as the family is concerned, he is the greatest of stars, but how are those outside the family circle to be persuaded to give him their willing attention? In "Go See" (from which this frame enlargement is taken), P. Morley Flook, the producer, uses a holiday at the seaside as a framework. A framework there must be — some motivation and thread of continuity to prevent the domestic picture from becoming a hotch-potch.*



1.



2.



3.

tion ground will serve as a flying field.

We'll need some shots of other children admiring the aeroplane, of Willie winding the propeller, of his great moment as he launches the plane into the air. Then comes the obstacle! The plane curves gracefully into the blue of the sky, hovers for a moment, and dives straight into the top of a tall tree. Consternation, followed by frantic attempts to dislodge the plane with stones, etc. The plane will not be dislodged. Father is summoned. He, too, tries, but without success. Father and son go home disconsolately.

A sad child goes to bed. We see him tossing and turning in his sleep and

*No, these frame enlargements are not from a family movie. They come from a fictional film, "Beauty and the Bishop", one of last year's Ten Best. But these are precisely the kind of shots of which the domestic picture should be largely composed. Care taken over continuity (1 and 2), big close-ups (2 and 3), expressive reaction shots (3), a feeling of liveliness (1, 2 and 3), giving the family something to do, seizing the opportunity of capturing typical expressions . . . with material such as this the most rudimentary plot will suffice.*

(if we have a suitable camera) we can superimpose over his pillow pictures of the plane swooping and diving. The wind rises. Curtains billow. He wakes up. The house is quiet and dark.

We see the little chap put his feet into some slippers and pull on a jacket or something over his pyjamas. He creeps downstairs. (There is an opportunity here to introduce an element of suspense — frightening shadows and blurred shapes.)

A tiny figure crosses the deserted, moonlit road and climbs the railings of the recreation ground. Trees are tossing in the wind. Willie goes straight to the tree, leaning on the wind. Joy! The plane has fluttered to the ground, and he recovers it. Closing shots of a happy little boy, with his plane, walking up the pathway of his house and, later, asleep with the precious model on a bedside table.

Surely this unpretentious little story shows more facets of a child's growing up than the stereotyped film snapshot? Each stage in the development of your family is susceptible to similar treatment — a plot that is scarcely more than an incident or an anecdote will suffice. Remember the magic word *obstacle* and you can get a plot from almost any situation.

Your small daughter's party, for example. You want a record of it, but can you not weave some kind of story into it? What about the party dress her mother is trying to make, and the trouble she has in overcoming various obstacles in time. (The sewing machine that goes wrong; the way Dad nearly electrocuted himself when he tried to repair it; the little girl jumping up and down with excitement while the dress is being fitted; the baby brother who hides the half-completed dress in some unlikely place).

As a record of family life, your films may ultimately include a wedding. You may already have suitable background material, but if you haven't, get hold of some early still

photographs of the bride when she was a little girl, when she was older and captain of the hockey team, her twenty-first birthday party, and so on. Let Mother be thumbing through a photograph album, perhaps sighing as she realises her little girl is now a grown woman. Film the wedding. At the end of an exciting day, let Mum slowly walk upstairs, push open the door of the bedroom her daughter has left for ever, and take out the album again. Dad, perhaps, gives her a comforting hug. Corny? Honestly expressed sentiment need not be.

At least we can agree that it's high

#### TRY YOUR CAMERA OUT ON THESE

1. Father wants an afternoon nap in his favourite deck chair. What obstacle or obstacles could spoil it for him?
2. Mother is trying to make a birthday cake. What obstacles could you put in her way?
3. The whole family, at the instigation of Father, decide to clean the car. What could go wrong?
4. Father is erecting a new garden shed. What could turn this into a disastrous operation?
5. Willie is flying his new model aeroplane. What could make this a long-remembered event?

time we took the family film a lot more seriously. I don't know how many cine cameras will be sold this year, but quite a few million feet of colour film will be shot in suburban gardens, on holidays at home and abroad. Once you've learned how to use a movie camera, try to turn yourself into some kind of storyteller. Your film will be all the better for it.

#### QUIK SPLICE PRICE REDUCTION

Price reductions throughout the Quik Splice range are announced by David Williams (Cine Equipment) Ltd. The pocket kit originally listed at 15s is now down to 12s 6d, while the metal based splicer is down to 39s 6d from 49s 6d. The automatic butt splicer with a plastic base has been reduced from 39s 6d to 29s 6d. On the firm's stand at the recent Photo-Cine Fair, a loop of film joined by Quik Splice was run continually every day of the week without evident wear at the join.

# A PILL-BOX TO PEEP THROUGH

## Easy-to-Make Hand Viewer for Single Frames

IMAGINE AN ORDINARY old-fashioned pill-box, about an inch in diameter, made of cardboard and with snug push-on lid. With a razor blade, cut two slots opposite to one another in the side of that part of the lid which slides over the box, making the width of the slots the width of the gauge you use. Lay a piece of film in both slots, across the lid, and with a pin mark the four corners of a frame as near as you can to the lid centre. Cut out the rectangle between the pinholes to form an aperture of frame size.

On removing the bottom of the pill-box, you have made yourself a rudimentary viewer. With it, you can examine, frame by frame, a length of film—which is conveniently prevented from slipping by friction between lid and box. You aim the gadget at a light source, preferably a window, to view.

The next stage is to add a magnifier. For this you need a simple bi-convex lens of focal length between 2 and 3 inches, and as near pill-box diameter as possible. Mount the lens in a home-rolled paper tube, slide the tube over the pill-box body till it brings the frame into sharp focus, and stick it there.

The hand viewer is now complete except for applying a dab of black ink inside to improve quality by removing scattered light. One refinement, for 8mm. film, is to make the slots in the lid slightly off-centre so that the vertical centre line of the frame lies along a diameter.

Examining a frame in the isolation given by the mask surrounding the cut-out aperture is a great help in concentrating one's attention and avoiding distraction. Any simple lens will do for the magnifying-glass job, such as the condenser from a cast-off projector. A camera lens is not really suitable unless it has a focal length of over 1in. and an aperture of at least f/1.9—but preferably larger.

As a final touch, you may care to add an eyepiece before the lens. It should be about 3/16in. diameter and be as near as possible to the lens. By forcing the viewing eye to keep close to the optical axis of the gadget, it will improve quality; it will also reduce the chances of the lens surface being touched—the driest and horniest of human fingers leaves a mark on glass.

### Useful for Fine Cutting

Though an animated viewer is obviously preferable for editing, a first-class cutting job can be done with one of these simple viewers for single frames. Take those close-ups, where you know that the length and content are about right but that at the end of the shot the subject looked at the camera. With a frame viewer it is easy to start at that end and work backwards till you find the frame showing the eyes turning towards the lens: one

frame further back for safety, and then cut. If it is used only for such purposes as this, the frame viewer justifies itself.

One kind of film assessment that cannot be done with it is comparing exposure levels. For this job, select and keep a few sample strips of film that experience has shown to represent the right exposure for your particular projection set-up. Then, when you want to assess some new material, hold up the "standard" shots and those you are judging and view them together against a light background.

Incidentally, holding up against a light background a length containing several shots enables you to assess the consistency of your exposure by comparing their overall densities. This can be quite revealing.

### ONE LENS, TWO GAUGES

THERE IS NOTHING MYSTERIOUS about using different lenses in different cameras. The three important factors are covering power, focal length, and type of mount.

*Covering Power* is the least-mentioned but the simplest. It simply means the area of good-quality image produced by a lens under its specified working condition. Thus, a typical lens for an 8mm. camera covers the 8mm. frame area (0.172 x 0.129in.) whereas the corresponding 16mm. lens covers 0.380 x 0.284in. If, therefore, you used such an 8mm. camera lens in a 16mm. camera, only the centre part of the image would be of good quality, the outer parts deteriorating rapidly. However, if a 16mm. lens is used in an 8mm. camera, which is quite common, there is surplus image "spilling" around the camera gate (which matters little so long as it is absorbed by a really good matt black paint on all surfaces between lens and gate aperture).

*Focal Length* is a quality inherent in the design of the lens and thus remains the same whatever film size the lens is used with—if you take a "standard" lens for 16mm., focal length 25mm., and use it on an 8mm. camera, its focal length will still be 25mm. This means that from a given camera position the 25mm. takes in only half the field of the "standard" 12½mm. lens commonly used in 8mm. filming. Knowing this is rather useful for extreme telephoto shots. With the readily available 3in. lens for 16mm. cameras, you can get—on 8mm.—six times the magnification given by the 12½mm. lens: it will take in only 7½in. subject width at a camera distance of 10ft.

*Mounting.* Here there are two factors: the distance from the lens flange to the film plane, and the fixing arrangements. Screw threads are subject to some variations, but in the standard D-mount for 8mm. cameras, the thread diameter is ½in. and the distance 0.484in. For 16mm. C<sub>4</sub> mounts, the thread diameter is 1in. and the distance 0.690in. On both mounts, the threads have 32 turns to the inch. These dimensions are such that adaptors can be made to permit most 16mm. lenses to be used in 8mm. cameras;

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New house going up—for its owners the kind of once-only event that deserves to be recorded on film. Progress is made easier to follow if shots of key stages are taken from roughly the same viewpoint, like these.

further, Leica-type lenses can be used, with another adaptor, in 16mm. cameras.

By using both adaptors together, Leica lenses can be used in 8mm. cameras, but this is perhaps going to extremes. There is rather too much spill; the Leica lens is inclined to be too heavy for the 8mm. camera's front plate; and finally there may be an adverse build-up of tolerances, giving a poor focus. However, the cameraman has got to be ready for an emergency, particularly in special effects, and it is nice to know that these things are possible.

Wide-angle C-mount lenses for 16mm. are seldom usable in adaptors on 8mm. cameras; most would foul the front face of the adaptor, except possibly when focused on close subjects.

#### ON THE RECORD

DO YOU REMEMBER to film things while they're still there to be filmed, or before they alter? Probably, if the things happen to be your children, you do. But what about non-human subjects—subjects that may not look interesting today but which will turn into fascinating and maybe priceless records a few years from now?

Your garden, for example? I know a keen gardener who gets his camera out almost every time he alters the layout or plants a new shrub. Result: from what were dull little shots at the time he has been able to assemble a quite absorbing "biography" recording the transformation of a once-scruffy bit of ground.

One quality that adds to the effect of this film is that the gardener realised right from the start the value of a fixed camera position—not for every shot, of course, but for those where it is illuminating for the audience to be able to make a direct comparison from one year to the next.

An undertaking offering similar opportunities for a film recording progress is the building of a house. Although the four stages shown in the accompanying illustrations would not be sufficient to cover this operation on the screen (there is certainly too big a continuity gap between the second and third), the sequence does show the usefulness of the more-or-less standardised viewpoint for conveying an idea of development or growth.

This, by the way, is one type of record film you shouldn't fail to make, either on your own behalf or that of a friend, if you have the chance. Getting to the building site at all crucial stages may seem a bit of a chore at the time, but the eventual film is most satisfying to have and keep.

The two main requirements are to choose key stages to

shoot so that the whole job can be covered in a reasonably short film—say not more than ten minutes—and to include some personal action. The film maker must decide resolutely what he wants to say and not spread his net too wide. This is to be the story of a house, not a documentary on the craft of building. Instead of carefully devised sequences in which the bricklayers, plumbers and joiners demonstrate their particular skills, show these specialists at work *incidentally*, as a background to scenes more "personal" to the owners of the house.

Such personal scenes give scope for running gags. If the family includes a young child, then at several stages in the progress one could pan from a craftsman doing his job to the child carrying out his version of it. There may be room, too, for routine but personal jokes about tea breaks, alterations, people being hemmed in by loads of bricks, etc. Another useful sequence, with somebody doing some good descriptive mime, is to have non-existent items like sinks and clothes hangers being "put in place" when the foundations have been marked out, but building has barely started. The car can also be carefully driven into the garage at the stage when the garage walls are only two or three courses high.



**NON-TOPPLE BOTTLE.**—Designed to prevent messy accidents at the cutting bench is the new non-spill flask for May & Baker film cement. These 1oz. packs cost 2s. 9d. There is also a 500 c.c. (approx. 18 oz.) size at 13s. 6d.—much cheaper initially but, for the average user, not necessarily more economical; cement will not keep indefinitely without some deterioration in quality.

Embacoid is for nitrate (inflammable) and acetate (safety) stocks only. Tricoid is made for the tri-acetate stocks in general use today, but is also effective with acetate films.

# Correspondence

## Stripe Quality

AS AN ADVOCATE of sound stripe I was puzzled and not a little disappointed to read the remarks made by Mr. P. J. Ryde (June 15) during the discussion on new thoughts on projection speeds. I feel that any reader who has not yet heard sound stripe can hardly fail to gain the impression that it is scarcely worth while. I quote: "Eight mm. stripe is only 0.8mm. wide, and stripe is much rougher than tape, so gives correspondingly poorer results".

To suggest that the stripe is rougher than tape fails to take into consideration the existence of laminated stripe which is, in fact, high quality tape cemented to the film edge. Desmond Roe alludes to this later but describes it as the new laminated stripe. I have been using it for at least two-and-a-half years, so it's hardly new.

As the owner of a Cirse-Sound projector I can vouch for the good quality obtainable from stripe and, indeed, *ACW*'s review of this machine was very favourable. Yet Mr. Ryde describes the sound from stripe as "mushy". Again, I quote: "We have all found that 8mm. stripe quality is much poorer than tape quality as a rule".

The frequency range reproduced is not so wide, but is the word "poorer" the right one? Desmond Roe, in earlier remarks, says: "You'd be surprised how 'hi-fi' a recording level up to only 5,000 c.p.s. can sound, provided it is clean and free from distortion". I believe that the use of the word "poorer" in comparing stripe with tape does less than justice to stripe.

I would like to ask whether or not we really want "hi-fi" for cine? We have never had it in the commercial cinema, except in special installations (I believe that in conventional cinemas the upper frequency range reproduced is 8,000 cycles per second), and a 16mm. optical track is far from "hi-fi". Yet most people do not consider good optical sound track as being "poorer" than tape, which it most certainly is.

It is my experience that people hearing a well recorded 8mm. sound stripe track reproduced on good equipment for the first time are greatly surprised at the excellent sound obtained, even at 16 frames a second. The A.B. Pathe release of an 8mm. sound colour film of the Royal Wedding is perhaps one of the most ambitious 8mm. stripe tracks produced. It has to be heard to be believed. It was a pity the picture quality was not comparable with that of the sound track.

I don't think anyone would disagree that stripe is the most convenient sound system available to the 8mm. user at the present time. Once there is a widespread

appreciation of how good sound can be from sound stripe, the demand for equipment will be such that prices will be lowered and will come within the reach of larger numbers of people.

Congratulations on your excellent new journal and your extremely good test reports.

Birstall.

R. W. RICHARDS,  
B.Pharm., F.P.S.

## Recording a Commentary

G.R. IS TO BE congratulated on his concise but very clear explanation, in three brief paragraphs (June 29) of the pilot method of recording a commentary on tape. He asks: "What could be simpler?"

One could answer: the use of a four-track recorder such as the Grundig TK24, which makes the use of a second recorder unnecessary. On the Grundig TK24, tracks 1 and 3 can be played separately or together; similarly with tracks 2 and 4. Assume that track 1 is reserved for commentary and track 3 for music and effects, then the procedure is as follows:

(i) Set up projector and recorder so that they start together, and screen the film.

(ii) Record the pilot commentary on track 3, by calling out the cue numbers of each sentence as the relevant shots appear, in the manner recommended by G.R.

(iii) Switch off the projector and sit in a comfortable chair with the recorder at hand. Attach the monitor/amplifier to the recorder, don the earphones, switch over to track 1 on which the commentary is now made in full, while listening for the cue numbers on track 3.

(iv) Music and effects can easily be added later to track 3 while listening on the headphones to the full commentary on track 1. The pilot commentary on track 3 will, of course, be erased automatically from the track during the recording of the music.

G.R.'s method and the alternative using a Grundig TK24 are so simple, for the straight-forward commentary, that one cannot help being mildly surprised to observe the complicated set-ups used by so many amateurs. The great advantages of the pilot commentary are as stated by G.R.: "No noise from the projector, plenty of light to read by, the irksome business of looking at the film and trying to read the commentary at the same time obviated, all the time in the world to correct mistakes. . . . What could be simpler?"

Alwoodley, Leeds.

T. R. BRAMHAM.

## Film-Making too Much Bother?

I AM A RAW amateur, but I have been taking *ACW* for some months and have

bought a number of books, including *Making Holiday Films*. Now I am continually being advised to have a "beginning, middle and end" to my films and to get a story into them—in other words, to make films for other people's enjoyment.

I think this side of film-making is being stressed too much. It depresses me to think that cine cameras are not as good as still cameras for me, and that I must write scripts, do editing, and titling and a hundred other things before I become anywhere near a successful photographer. Frankly, most of us haven't enough time to do all this.

Why cannot we just remain amateur film-makers and leave the making of feature films, etc., to the budding professionals? Isn't there somebody who will write for us, and help us to make films we can ourselves enjoy?

Greenford.

H. E. BUNCE.

*To reply adequately to Mr. Bunce would take more than a footnote, so we have tried to ease his mind in the leader on page 133.*

## Depth of Field

BY COMPLICATING what is a simple matter Mr. Gordon Rowley collapses into error. When did "depth of field depend on focal length" or diminish with its increase? His example to prove this old fallacy is, as the Chinese say, "opaque", notwithstanding his lovers.

Depth of field depends on the stop diameter and nothing else. A 2in. lens of f/2 will have a one-inch aperture; so will a 6in. lens at f/6; so will a 40in. lens at f/40. And, believe it or not, all will have the same depth of field. No, don't shout at me, try it!

NORMAN LISSIMORE, B.C.H.

University of Leeds.

*Depth of field is directly related to hyperfocal distance, and hyperfocal distance is given by (Focal length)<sup>2</sup>/(Circle of confusion x fnumber). Depth therefore depends upon focal length. We agree that fnumber can be eliminated from the equation for hyperfocal distance by substituting its equivalent (Focal length + diameter) but does that really help? We always know what our fnumber is, but seldom know the dimensions of the iris corresponding to a particular stop.*

*We would not dream of shouting at Mr. Lissimore but we must remonstrate gently with him on two points. First, the three lenses he cites will have the same depth of field only if they are all focused at the same distance (a vital point he forgets to mention). Second, there is a risk of making the subject still more "opaque" by using terms like "stop diameter" and "a one-inch*

*(continued on next page)*

## Correspondence

*continued from previous page*  
**aperture"; usage has made "stop" and "aperture" signify f/number, not the width of the lens iris.**

### Splice Jumping

THE COMPLAINTS about splice jumping in the Eumig projector are a mystery to me. I have owned one of these machines for a number of years and have never had any cause to complain. Indeed, its performance leaves nothing to be desired.

I think the explanation is that I also use a Eumig splicer. Without a doubt this is a fine little instrument. Splices that I made five years ago have never come apart, and I cannot remember when I last had a film break in projection. I should, however, mention that I have filed a series of grooves in the scraper, which now gives a dry scrape—not a wet one as formerly.

Castle Bromwich.

G. C. PHILLIPS.

### Film Packings for H8

THE BOLEX H8 is advertised as able to accommodate film in 25, 50 and 100ft. lengths, and it was this factor, together with the many other features, that induced me to buy this fine camera. Unfortunately, I now find that whereas I can buy all makes of colour film in 25ft. lengths, I cannot buy any on 50ft. spools, and only one maker produces 100ft. spools for this camera. I am therefore back to my previous position of being limited in my choice of make and length of film stock.

Enquiry at the Cinex stand at the Photo-Cine Fair produced the comment that no one used 50ft. lengths and that Kodak made 100ft. spools specially for the H8. It is not worthwhile importing the large spools of Ferraniacolor, dealers tell me, because there is such a small demand for it in this packing. I know that it is not the fault of Bolex that the versatility of the camera is restricted through restriction in the supply of film, but I do feel that the matter should be ventilated. Is there no satisfactory solution to the problem? Perhaps other H8 owners may be able to help.

Barking.

A. H. THOMSON.

### A Tale of Shoe Laces

WAS VERY INTERESTED to read Double Run's review of *A Tale of Shoe Laces*, since I had a very small hand in the production, and still have some waste footage. A lot of the credit ought to go to the photographer and editor-in-chief, the Rev. Leonard Jackson, who was then in charge of the cinema at Ampleforth College and also made occasional school newsreels. Mr. Blackdon had, I believe, no experience of film-making, although he had been on the stage at one time.

You may be interested in some technical details. The camera was an ancient Victor, one of the original ones, very similar to the

Kinecam but with a larger finder with parallax adjustment; the lens was a lin. Wollensak—I don't remember what aperture. The exposure meter, an AVO-Smethurst Highlight, was another relic of pre-war days, and the film stock mostly Super X.

I am slightly curious to know where Double Run saw the film, but it was very pleasing to hear that it was not at all a bad effort.

Solihull.

J. R. DUNN.

(Senior operator, Ampleforth Kinema, 1952)

### Jerky Running

IT WAS WITH considerable amazement that I read the item "Jerky Running" (in Your Problems Solved of July 6). Both the statement and diagnosis are very wide of the mark. Jerkiness is due to the aspect distance between one frame and the next, if too great jerkiness is apparent. Now as 18 f.p.s. (over 16) reduces this distance approx 11% (using the same pan speed), the Admira 8IIA has the edge of 16 f.p.s. cameras in this respect.

I have frequently increased the f.p.s. to 24 with this end in view when panning landscapes or anything that would not give an impression of slow motion such as action. True, the greater sharpness one attains with the Admira makes a more vivid impression on the retina but is preferable to blurred jerkiness.

My experience with this delightfully slim and fascinatingly versatile camera is absolutely opposite to R.B.R.'s statement. I could show him pans (over 180°) of the Grand Harbour, Malta (taken during my recent visit as a delighted and grateful guest of the Malta Amateur Cine Circle),

## QUERY CORNER

### Wanted

8mm. colour scenes of Singapore, city and island.—G. Tricker, 15 Gilbert Road, Bromley, Kent.

Advice on a cable release for the Admira 8IIA.—P. Phillips, 107 West Bromwich Road, Walsall, Staffs. Mr. Phillips, who wants to do some single-frame work, has tried several releases but all have fouled the gearing on the lens mount (f/1.9), preventing their being screwed fully in.

Instruction book for Ensign Super Kinecam 16.—J. H. Whitelaw, 26 Eldon Grove, West Hartlepool, Co. Durham.

Instruction book for Nizo S2T 8mm. camera.—J. L. Harden, 5 Convent Avenue, Fairview, Dublin 3. Mr. Harden is also curious to know the purpose of a small spring-loaded lever directly below the sprockets on his S2T. It looks like a footage measurer but, he says, could touch the film only when the spool was nearly full. Moreover, it does not appear to be connected to anything and "moving it produces no visible result".

### Offered

16mm. Kodak magazines (empty, of course) for cost of postage.—James Henderson, 11 Lorne Street, Kirkcaldy, Fifehire.

which are as free from jerks as the best BBC tele panning. I can only think that R.B.R. has not yet found how to hold the 8IIA or otherwise needs his bones oiling. Let him try a pan at 8 f.p.s.! ('nuff said).

Chesterfield.

ERIC MOXON.

The statement at least can hardly have been "wide of the mark": it came from a reader who was describing an effect he had personally experienced and which he disliked. As to the diagnosis, we think it is generally accepted that a succession of slightly blurred images looks smoother than a succession of sharp images each showing a slightly different scene; whether smoothness is preferable to sharpness in panning shots is, we suppose, a matter of taste.

Other things being equal, a pan at 18 f.p.s. will be smoother than one at 16 f.p.s. In the Admira, therefore, there is one factor tending to make pans jerky and another tending to make them smooth. Which predominates depends on the nature of the background, the kind of action in the scene and (here Mr. Moxon is clearly a high scorer) the quality of the panning head and of its user's technique. Even so, what the Enquiry Bureau told the Rugby reader was that he would get smoother pans by turning his camera more slowly. This remains true.

### Straight Cuts

WARNER BROS., in their film, *A Fever in the Blood* (released in the London area last month) dispensed almost entirely with fades, dissolves and wipes, and used instead straight cuts. If Hollywood thinks that pictures can be presented just as effectively without those embellishments, it seems a good time for amateurs to throw away their fading glasses and other contraptions.

Iford.

JOHN LUTON.

### Cine Punctuation

A SHORT GUIDE to the purpose of dissolves: They are used either to bridge a gap in time but not in location, or a change in location but not in time.

Epsom.

TREVOR WHITE.

### Memorable Missenden

THIS YEAR'S practical film course on cinematography at Missenden Abbey provided me with the most enjoyable and rewarding week-end I have ever spent in cine activities. The organisation by Arthur Kingsbury, the hospitality of Miss Mills, the deputy warden, and the happy atmosphere noticeable throughout made the event one that will long be remembered. I feel that many of us will want to return next year to absorb points that could not all be taken in this time.

Buckinghamshire County Council have shown great foresight in each year providing such facilities in their beautiful college and we all felt that we should like to record our thanks.

South Croydon.

C. HAYDON BRASH.

## SOUND TOPICS

BY P. J. RYDE

# Recording Echo Speech Effects

without an echo chamber.



Fig. 1. Pye Transailer. Loudhailers can also sometimes be had from ex.-Govt. stores.

A FRIEND of mine who has the extraordinary knack of imitating the sounds of aeroplanes, motorcycles, machinery, footsteps, etc., by the unaided use of his vocal chords was giving a demonstration of his skill at a party, and I took the opportunity to record some of his efforts. The results were extremely disappointing. Instead of sounding authentic, it was painfully obvious that they were just the noises made by someone trying to imitate aeroplanes, motorcycles, etc.

A few days later, however, the same friend happened to be playing around with one of those portable transistorized amplifying loudhailers (Fig. 1) which are used for making announcements on sports fields and so forth, and I persuaded him to make some of his noises into the apparatus while I recorded the results. The outcome, particularly for noises which were supposed to be made by machinery, was astonishingly successful, owing to the nature of the distortion introduced by the amplifier of the loudhailer and the greatly increased "body" given to the sounds by the reverberation introduced by the flared speaker trumpet. It is the same sort of effect as makes

one's voice sound so much better in the bath.

Further experiments showed that small mechanically (rather than vocally) produced noises could also be amplified and deliberately distorted by the loudhailer to produce some remarkable effects. About a year ago I described how I recorded the noise of a toy clockwork car in such a way as to make the result sound like a shed full of machinery. I now repeated the experiment, using the loudhailer, and improved the effect enormously

The range of effects which the loudhailer will help to fake is enormous, for, on the one which I used, at any rate, the nature of the distortion was just exactly right when it was deliberately emphasised by placing the recording microphone very close to the speaker flare, and sometimes actually inside it. We managed to produce everything from the scream of jet aircraft to some pretty passable galloping horses, complete with Doppler effect as they "receded." This last was produced by beating a tattoo with my fingers on the metal surround of the loudhailer's microphone, gradually working my fingers towards the flare.

A further interesting use I found for the apparatus was the production of ghostly echo chamber effects. The loudhailer is, of course, designed for speech only and could not be used to add an echo effect to music unless

very crude and strident results were specifically desired (e.g., for a fairground scene). But it is magnificent for producing that weird echo that has come to be accepted as the convention for recollected dialogue: you know the sort of thing — a character sits thinking about the events which have led up to his present situation, and the sound track repeats in an eerie manner snatches of conversation heard in earlier scenes. If you fancy something like that, the loudhailer, spoken into softly, and with the recording microphone right inside the flare, is just the job.

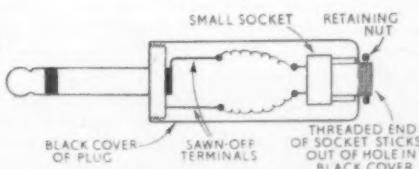
Doubtless there are theoretically more straightforward methods of producing these effects, both electronically and mechanically; (an ordinary conical megaphone is quite useful, incidentally, and some marvellous effects can be obtained using the flexible hose from a vacuum cleaner). But if you can lay your hands on a loudhailer, I'd recommend it every time, for even if you do manage to borrow one for the afternoon and then find it doesn't produce quite the effect you want, it's such a marvellous "toy" that you can keep everyone happy for hours playing station announcers with it.

### Hearing Aid for Monitoring

MANY PEOPLE NOWADAYS are finding that the miniature hearing-aid type of earphone is preferable to the conventional headphones for many monitor-

Fig. 3. The earphone, whose lead terminates in a small co-axial plug, and the adaptor into which the plug fits. The bright ring at the near end of the adaptor is the nut which keeps the miniature socket in place.

Fig. 2 Cross section through the adaptor.



ing jobs. These miniature phones are available very cheaply from most radio spares shops and are really intended for use with small transistorized wireless sets. They are normally fitted with a miniature plug and matching socket of the two-pin or coaxial variety, and these small plugs, of course, will not fit into the sockets on a recorder.

It is easy enough to remove the sub-standard plug and replace it with a normal one, but this is not always convenient, since the plug will be twice the size of the phone; besides looking ridiculous this can also be dangerous, for the plug is so much heavier than the phone that if it is left hanging over the edge of a table it is likely to pull the phone off on to the floor.

Instead of removing the plug that was provided, I overcame the difficulty by making an adaptor which enables the small plug to be connected to a standard co-axial socket. The basis of the adaptor is an ordinary unscreened co-axial plug. The black outer case is unscrewed, revealing the two terminals, which are sawn off so that only about a quarter of an inch is left; short, insulated wires are then soldered to the stumps. The other ends of these wires are connected to the miniature socket provided with the phone, and the black cover is screwed on to the plug again with the threaded section of the miniature socket sticking out through the hole in the top of the cover (which may have to be slightly enlarged). The retaining nut for the socket is then screwed on, and the adaptor is complete. (Figs. 2 and 3).

#### The Magic Tape

"THE BASF FILM, *The Magic Tape* . . . is becoming almost a standard item of club programmes," said ACW recently. Any club who has not yet screened it (it is not available to individuals) should certainly try to do so. Copies are available with an English commentary from BASF Chemicals Ltd, 5a Gillespie Road, London, N.S. In monochrome, sepia and colour, it runs for about 25 minutes.

Before I saw the film I imagined that it would be a straightforward account of the manufacture and uses of magnetic tape. It's *about* these things, it is true, but the treatment is most unusual, relying as it does to a large extent on a fantastic and surrealistic

approach. It is, in fact, anything but straightforward.

The visual part is at first sight merely chaotic, or perhaps one should say anarchic, but it has a subtlety and rhythm that become more apparent on a second showing, which the film certainly deserves. The sound track consists of the commentary, which is sometimes annoyingly obscure until one realises that this is not simply a factual documentary, and a good deal of *musique* which is either electronic or *concrète*, and sometimes both.

*The Magic Tape* is stunning — so much so that its full impact is not likely to be felt until some time after; at first it is more likely to bewilder

than to enlighten the audience. But provided they are able to cope with films that have an unconventional approach, I guarantee that it will hold them spellbound, and afterwards, though they may be none the wiser about magnetic tape, they'll talk about the film for months.

\* \* \*

THE CONSUMER'S ASSOCIATION announce that they hope to publish later this year in *Which?* a further report on tape recorders, to supplement the one that appeared in the January, 1961, issue. It will cover, among other things, direct recording, higher tape speeds, and subjective assessment of hum.

## It Takes All Sorts . . .

George H. Sewell, F.R.P.S., F.B.K.S., turns a critical eye on amateurs at summer film schools

I THOUGHT the attendance at the Pendley week-end cine course was pretty good, but Missenden Abbey this year beat all: 75 students and 37 cameras on the go. There was not room to board them all, and many people had to stay in hotels. The Deputy Warden told me they had had to turn down half the applications received, and although they tried to ensure that preference was given to newcomers, some old hands turned up again. Hugh Baddeley on shooting films abroad, John Aldred on sound recording, myself on film construction. . . We were listened to avidly, and dripping skies did not damp the students' enthusiasm for the shooting session. And they brought their films with them and kept us all up until 2 a.m. on Sunday morning seeing and discussing them. How rewarding it all was!

But this year's course had its element of sadness, for it was the last to be organised by the indomitable Arthur Kingsbury, Visual Aids Officer for Bucks, with whom I had the honour of starting the venture. Although he relinquishes his post, he will continue to live in Buckinghamshire and devote his leisure to widening his contacts with amateur cine societies. Many are the club members and lone workers who will remember him with affection and will wish him a long and happy retirement.

Students at summer schools make an interesting study, for they differ

quite remarkably. At one end of the scale there is the beginner, somewhat shy at first and reluctant to ask questions which will betray his ignorance to folk he imagines (often quite erroneously) to know a great deal more about cine than he does. At the other end are the people no less unwilling to ask questions — because they have a certain reputation but in fact usually know little more than those who revere them.

Then there is the type who affects to be superior to "all this elementary stuff" and asserts himself by constantly differing from the lecturer. He probably gets the least value of anyone from the course. Next is the Cheerful Charlie — generally a thoroughly good chap — whose films contain all the familiar faults and who wonders why anyone should go to so much trouble to make a simple holiday film.

One of the most infuriating students is the man who doesn't listen to explanations and instructions, and when he takes his own shots expects the whole thing to be explained to him again in detail while the rest of the class wait. Men indulge in what the old time sergeant major called "dumb insolence." You tell them: "It's no good trying to shoot from over there. Come over here!", and they become suddenly deaf and blind, stay stolidly *in situ* and shoot, and have even been known to complain some weeks later

(continued on page 160)

# Shooting Camp Fires in Colour

BY DOUBLE RUN

A SCRIPT makes all the difference, we are often told. The other day it certainly did. For one shot, we had to light a fire on a desolate hillside, but had forgotten to bring paper for kindling. Luckily, we all had our scripts. . . . Camp fires are awkward subjects to film, but they can be tackled in colour. There are various methods. First, light the bonfire in a shady spot during the day and under-expose by at least two stops. If you exclude the sky and sunlit areas, the result is acceptable, although it looks more like evening than night. Secondly, film at dusk, when you can include the sky, but again it will look like evening. The bonfire has to be blazing if it is to make much impression.

Thirdly, wait until it really is dark, then bring in photofloods to light your subjects. The odd colouring produced by using daylight colour film in photoflood lighting may not matter. If it does, use Type A. Take reflected light readings from your subjects' faces and then, if you want, you can under-expose by a stop or so. Wave papers in front of the lamps to produce a flickering effect.

CUs of bonfires can, of course, quite easily be taken at full aperture without any other form of lighting, but they do not interest an audience for long! If you are a stickler for detail you can fake close shots indoors, against a black background, of faces in flickering light, but you will almost certainly lose the happy spontaneity that made the scene worth filming in the first place.

## Filming for Television

I SUPPOSE you'll not be going to the Himalayas this summer? A friend of mine is. He's taking a cine camera with him, hoping to film some material for television. For the present, at any rate, TV won't accept 8mm., but the advice sent him by an American TV company is no less applicable (or non-applicable) to the 8mm. travel filer, so you might find it useful to know. Here are some of their suggestions:—

- \* When shooting native sequences, try to keep modern touches, such as automobiles, telephone poles, bill-boards, etc., out of the picture. . . .
- \* Be on the look out for the opportunity to photograph comedy touches; for example, the old trick of filming with your camera upside down to reverse the motion is still a very effective technique. . . .
- \* Be on the look-out for elements appealing to children.
- \* Aspects of sex and vice in foreign countries have curiosity appeal for all of us. . . .
- \* As a general practice we do not want scenes of ordinary industry, factories, flowers or native farming and agriculture. This is the commonest form of travelogue footage slanted for nice old ladies of the lecture hall who get a vicarious thrill at the sight of an Egyptian using a camel to plough a field.
- \* Whenever it is humanly possible to do so, please use a tripod or some of the other ingenious "stabilizing" devices currently on the market.
- \* Don't be a film miser. If a scene is worth shooting at all, it should run at least 10 seconds at the speed of 24 f.p.s.

Night scene shot with the aid of photofloods. But you can also film both in the daytime and at dusk.



\* Very few things have more appeal than the human face. Don't be afraid of close-ups. . . .

\* There is a mistaken impression that pan shots are amateurish. Personally, we don't understand how it is possible to get an impressive shot of a regiment of soldiers without panning.

\* Here are the ingredients, in order of importance, which we look for in any film submitted to us: (a) action; (b) documentary adventure and excitement; (c) the unusual and the bizarre; (d) the charming and the sentimental; (e) good travelogue.

\* Check your camera for dirt and dust after each roll of film whenever this is practicable. . . . A cheap brush and a minute of time could mean the difference to you of several thousands of dollars, if not more.

I'll leave it to you to work out which of these hints are helpful, but I must register a protest about the second. Perhaps it's just as well that the single sprocket holes make the effect difficult to achieve on 8mm. American TV may not want scenes of "ordinary industry", but, as these are precisely what amateur travel films need, I can't keep quiet about this, either. Otherwise, we could do worse than take the advice offered. And think of those "several thousands of dollars, if not more"!"

## Professional Judges Amateur Films

THERE WERE SEVEN entries for this year's club competition — not a startling number, considering we have 75 members, but quite enough to make up an interesting and varied programme. *Hey Ho, Come to the Zoo* ran to 360ft. of 8mm. colour, with sound (mostly music) on tape. A young couple wander round the zoo, but they do not come to life as individuals, and it is not at all obvious why the producer chose to film them.

Indeed, it is not at all obvious why he made the film. He seemed to have no particular point of view to express and no illuminating comments or contrasts to make. There are some effective shots of animals, but no creative editing. Even had the editing gone no farther than, for example, assembling the shots of the penguins and of the people watching them to bring out the amusing similarity in stance, the audience's interest might have been aroused.

"We hope you enjoyed your visit as much as we did," says the commentator. "Goodbye!" But we did not see the couple really enjoying anything. "This film," said the judge, a professional producer — he had recorded his (continued on p. 149)

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*Continued from page 147*  
 comments on tape—"needed drastic cutting, a much more relaxed performance from the young couple and more close-ups."

*Canal Cruise* also had some effective moments, but the people taking part were never clearly established, and seemed to vary in number, age and sex throughout. Indeed, it did not always look as though it were the same boat. A commentary would have helped here. Most of the filming seemed to have been done at locks. The adjudicator criticised the erratic exposure and some shaky camerawork, but other parts, he thought, "were pleasantly photographed."

*Continental Holiday* was one of the two 16mm. entries. A very well photographed colour film, it provided very adequate coverage of a visit to Oberammergau, but there was little personal feeling about it except for a remark about "an advertisement for beer which shall be nameless as well as tasteless." "A patchy production, in which shots were far too short, but some of the photography was up to professional standards," said the adjudicator.

The other 16mm. entry, *Labour of Love*, was shot on home-processed ex-Govt. stock and had the picture quality one might expect from that combination. Made up of snippets showing a club film in production, it had some amusing touches. I particularly liked the title, "Our grateful appreciation to Mrs. Hodson without whose assistance this film would never have been possible," superimposed on a shot of a tea pot. "As a lark," said the adjudicator, "it is pleasant enough," but the photography was inconsistent; "this could be due to the processing." But I like the shot—a magnificent one—of corn being planted (as in the club film), followed by one of corn flake packets shooting up.

*Moonlight Waters* was an 8mm. colour film of a day's fishing on a Brixham trawler. The producer had had to get up at 4 a.m., and the trip had cost her £3. It has some striking shots illustrating a very personal approach, effective use of silhouettes, and a general awareness of what was going on (e.g., many shots of men drinking tea), but

is over-long so that one's interest flags before the end. "There were far too many repetitive shots," said the adjudicator, but he awarded it second prize all the same.

The first prizewinner was *Field Day*, an 8mm. monochrome (yes, monochrome) account of a competition run by amateur radio enthusiasts. It begins with a drum roll and a most imposing title, "Regal Cine Productions" superimposed on a spinning camera, but the film happily belies this lurid opening, proving to be a most comprehensive and very carefully assembled documentary, with a really informative commentary on tape. The music, which I cannot describe further than to say that it sounded like jiggling Morse keys, seemed to me highly appropriate, but the adjudicator complained that "the alleged music drives one to distraction." The treatment, he thought, was rather laborious but very competent.

I agree that *Field Day* deserved its prize, but the seventh entry, *Spring Adventure*, by the author of *Moonlight Waters*, seemed to me the most interesting film of the lot. The titles are seen on shots of a stream, then a small boy looks in a shop window. He cycles along country paths, takes a bird's egg, looks at a hedgehog, gazes at a water wheel, fishes with his net in a stream. We see the fish (his mother caught them, took them home, and filmed them in a Perspex tank) and next a frog crawls over him, and he chases it around. And that is all.

There are jump cuts, continuity errors, and at times it is all very bewildering (there were two breaks during projection), but there is also some magnificent colour (Agfacolor exposed in a Bell & Howell 624) and the tape track of birds singing and the sounds of the countryside gives it a strangely lyrical quality. "Indifferent photography . . . shots held too long," complained the adjudicator, but the sheer charm of it made it memorable for me.

If you take your filming at all seriously, said the professional, the two most important things to remember are, first, never to hand-hold the camera, and secondly that "a film is made in the cutting room." It was obvious why he preferred *Field Day*, but *Spring Adventure* for me!



ABOVE.—Getting ready to dive with a Perspex-encased 8mm. Autoset camera is Horace E. Dobbs of the British Sub-Aqua Club (Oxford branch). In a recent article, Mr. Dobbs described the construction of the case and the usefulness in underwater filming of a fully automatic electric eye exposure-control.

RIGHT.—With a bicycle pump, Mr. Dobbs pressurises the camera case before diving. There was no leakage at depths of up to 100ft.

## WATERPROOFED AUTOSSET IN ACTION



# FILMS ON HOBBIES

*can provide an answer to the vexed question:*

*What shall we shoot next?*

ANYONE WHO SAYS: "What is there left to film? What shall I make my next picture about?" had better throw his camera away. There is, after all, the whole world to choose from — and all the people in it. Even so, it is interesting sometimes to consider some possible sources of themes, to look at one or two areas that haven't been very well covered by personal producers.

In the field of factual films it is possible to point out omissions, ranges of subjects which are filmic and which must arouse considerable interest, yet which have not been thoroughly explored by the cine camera and recorder. I am thinking in particular of hobbies. If film-making demands a passion for the theme expressed, then surely we can expect some excellent pictures from enthusiasts who want to illustrate the fascination of their hobbies? But how many really good films can you remember which convey all the knowledge, excitement and devotion which a man can bring to bear on a subject which occupies great chunks of his spare time?

I've seen amateur films about butterfly collections, making ships in bottles, still photography and motor rally driving. Most of them have been roughly made, drearily commentated and about as inspiring as a dictionary definition of their subject. There are two possible reasons for this. The first concerns the subject matter. Clearly, one hobby may be considerably more cinematic than another. You've more chance of making, say, flying power-driven model aeroplanes exciting than you have with stamp collecting.

Even so, the talented enthusiast may still get away with an unlikely subject. I would never have believed that the cultivation of cacti and succulents could be made the subject of an engrossing film until I saw Gordon Rowley's delightful Gold Star winner last year. It may be that almost any hobby can be considered filmworthy if the producer is sufficiently sensitive and experienced. Unfortunately, few amateur producers possess the technical resourcefulness and the wit of a Gordon Rowley, so perhaps we had better keep off unlikely hobbies, only pausing to marvel when someone does turn up with a magnificent film about something we never thought cinematic.

Which brings us to the second reason for the comparative staleness of most hobby films. There is no substitute



BY JACK SMITH

*At the camera, Paul Bertolot, Three Star award winner in this year's Ten Best.*

Taxidermy, railways, black and white prints from colour transparencies . . . these are the subjects of three of the hobby films entered for the current Ten Best competition. If you, too, have made a film about a hobby, we shall be glad to hear from you. We invite you to tell us about its production, of any special problems your subject presented and why you chose the treatment you finally adopted.

for film-making talent. Your model-builder or moth-collector may be an expert on his hobby, but pedestrian in his attitude to movie production. It is perhaps unlikely that we shall find an enthusiast for one subject with a similar enthusiasm for a second — the business of making films. If you devote most of your spare time to hunting down eighteenth century epitaphs or to renovating old steam traction engines, it's unlikely that you can spare as much time again to learning and thinking about film production.

Still, even if you're not an expert cinematographer, you begin with a great advantage not shared by many more experienced producers: you have a subject that really excites you, and there's no reason why this excitement shouldn't come through on the screen. Cine clubs should be able to help considerably here. Surely, with the wealth of equipment they so frequently command and the assortment of technical talent they have to draw upon, they would welcome the opportunity of being responsible for a few good films, instead of the unhappy stuff they usually turn out. I can't believe they are really content with their output. It is kinder to suppose that they can't find the subjects. Well, here is a possible solution to their difficulties.

Is there a vintage car club in your district? Then why not contact its committee, and see if you can find a part-sponsor for a film about early motor cars? If they are willing to come in with you, go along and find out all about their activities and their interests. Appoint "technical advisers," and make sure that you consult them at every stage in the scripting, shooting, editing and commentating procedures. In the end, you may find that you have produced a picture which a lot of people will want to see.

When cine clubs do get on to this kind of thing, they often ruin the entire effort by using the subject only as an excuse for one of their silly "comedies." Or they pepper their would-be documentary with stale wise-cracks and unfunny "business" which is an insult to the enthusiasts who want to see their pet hobby taken seriously. Still, I offer this suggestion just in case there are clubs whose members are willing to get down to the hard but rewarding task of recording someone else's enthusiasms on film.

At the least ambitious, the lone worker (in whom I put more trust) might make a little picture about a model railway in the garden, built and operated by a friend who loves trains but knows nothing about film work. Or he might go further, and see if a local dramatic society will pay at least some of the cost of a much more complex 16mm. sound film featuring the delights and excitements of amateur play production.

Obviously, you must share some of the hobbyist's interest in what he does. If you hate spiders, you are scarcely likely to make a good film about them (unless you finish up with a few hundred feet of horror, which will hardly please the natural history fraternity!).

#### This Subject Provides Action A-plenty

You are luckiest if you are yourself film-maker and hobbyist, like Gordon Rowley. He loves his spiky cacti as much as he cherishes his film-making equipment; he nearly made me a cactophile when I read the delightful book he wrote about his favourite plants! As I mentioned in my last article, I am a railway enthusiast as well as being a film lover. Since many railway experts are also fine still photographers (look at the photographs in railway magazines if you don't believe this) it does surprise me that so few good railway films have appeared.

Steam is wonderfully photogenic, and the sounds of trains must surely provide material for rich and impressive sound tracks. As diesels and electrics take over more and more of Britain's railways, it's sad that we aren't collecting a few dozen really inspired film treatments of the last steam locomotives roaring from city to city with the big

expresses, or clanking away their last few years of working life in sidings or on country branch lines.

If you can't work out complete films, surely you can at least capture some episodes of railway working? Every week-day morning, at ten o'clock, a Scottish express glides into the platform of a country junction near my home town in the north of England, and a couple of carriages from a Lake District branch are shunted on. Here's an ideal subject for a three- or four-minute film. It would provide a fine exercise in shot selection and editing technique, and the end result would be a delight to railway enthusiasts who are offered pretty dull material by the one or two firms who sell 8mm. and 16mm. "films" for train fans who own projectors.

And why not complete films? You have many possible frameworks around which to construct them: a day in the life of a country station (or a busy junction); a day in the life of an old engine relegated to shunting duties at your local station; a trip along a branch line; the departure of a named express from one of the big termini. I seem to remember that there was a film about a North Wales branch line among the Ten Best ten or eleven years ago. Since then, I don't think that there have been more than half-a-dozen pictures with railway themes. Maybe most personal film-makers run cars?

Perhaps if the colour fiends went down to the Bluebell Line at Sheffield Park, and saw that delicious little Terrier tank engine, resplendent in yellow livery, chugging along a kind of country lane with a rake of ancient coaches and another diminutive engine giving a push in the rear, they might consider giving it the full film treatment? There were certainly plenty of cine cameras in evidence when I was down there the other week-end, but I saw precious few signs that anyone was really making a film about it all.

Make a good hobby film, and you're serving enthusiasts and ensuring yourself an audience. Make a good railway film (forgive my bias) and you may well be producing a valuable social record at the same time. But this aspect of personal film production is something I want to talk about next time.

## The Challenge of the Youth Club

FILM-MAKING in youth clubs is an all too rare activity. The Film Teachers' Year Book lists only six films made by such clubs as against over a hundred and twenty from secondary schools. The primary schools' section of a mere thirty titles shows that, like the youth service, they can claim to be Education's Cinderellas.

Compare the size of the junior schools entry with the secondary and comprehensive section; their expenses for film making must come from school funds which are proportionately smaller and therefore can rarely extend to such activities. Parent-teachers associations may be called upon to help raise money, but there's usually a host of enthusiasts, from school orchestras to drama groups, quick to make demands.

As for the youth clubs, while they remain among the underprivileged class

*If you are seeking new fields you might well find a visit to your local group very rewarding*

BY C. V. THOMPSON

where finance is concerned, their activities must remain in the less expensive domain of football, swimming and boxing, which isn't as healthy as it looks. One London club is envied for its possession of a Kine-cam, tripod, light meter, and editor. Is it any wonder that film festival organisers must go on scraping the barrel for entries? One London event last year received but eight entries, one on 8mm., and three of them made five or more years ago.

Some education authorities have a 16mm. camera or two for loan; the Screen Education Society, in association with the



*Are the youth clubs wrong to base their activities on 16mm. merely because 16mm. equipment can sometimes be had on loan? Ickenham Youth Centre F.S., here seen at work on their first film, believe in self-help. They use 8mm. (Sportster Duo) and between them can muster a number of tape recorders. And surely many youth clubs can do the same?*



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## Challenge of the Youth Club

(Continued from previous page)

British Film Institute, offers a complete set of 16mm. equipment for a very modest fee. Membership is open to all film enthusiasts. There is at least one organisation with a brand new 16mm. Bell & Howell and a searching eye for any club wishing to take the plunge. Its Youth Organiser is a film enthusiast with advice to offer as well as equipment, determined to add to the six film-making groups he could now raise at a pinch in the whole of Greater London.

### Problem of Costs

But even when equipment is available, the purchase of film stock presents a problem. Four hundred feet, plus processing, make a hefty bill for most club treasurers, so Government surplus stocks or current reversal are favoured. At the editing stage, everything has to be cut to a carefully laid plan, leaving no room for experiment. This cutting print usually forms the finished product without the face-lift of a graded dupe, and its life-time is often shortened through rough usage.

The voluntary worker is the nucleus of the Youth Service, but a sufficient supply of instructors is difficult to find. The idea of having a film unit in the club is to teach the lads to make film, not merely to set up a camera and press the button at the leader's direction. The instructor has to be prepared to see the gags mishandled and the plot descend into melodrama, and he must ensure that the film does not become his own baby. This is a point which should be kept in mind by some competition judges. It's tempting to insinuate one's adult ideas into a production, but one can hardly claim the result as a boy's film.

### Courses and Festivals

Equipment and film stock may be in short supply, yet there is encouragement a-plenty in festivals and courses of instruction. *Paper Chase* brought an ACW Oscar to Cornwell Secondary School this year, a section of the N.U.T. offers awards for children's films, and the London Federation of Boys' Clubs and Union of Mixed Boys' and Girls' Clubs each hold an annual arts festival. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme includes film-making as one of its pursuits, with the cherished Gold Star glittering at the end of three simple stages in film production.

Courses of instruction are often sponsored by local education authorities. The National Association of Boys' Clubs, the London Federation and the Union of Maccabi Clubs, all have run week-end schools or even shorter sessions, for the most part held in a delightful old manor near Amersham, with acres of ground providing plenty of locations.

In the new youth group, the necessity of providing everyone with something to do over-rides almost everything. Ambitious projects cannot be entertained, for shooting is restricted to once-weekly sessions (since filming is not the only club activity) and these for the most part in winter evenings when location work is impossible. Week-end outings are difficult to arrange, for lost soccer matches, non-attendance at church and even a few broken romances are all charged to them.

### Shorts Only

Everyone wants a turn at handling the camera or playing a part. No one feels up to script writing or editing. This is the challenge the club instructor must accept. Then, again, a youth club is like a railway station. Members come and go at a moment's notice, so only short projects are practicable.

What is the value of a two-hour session spent in producing a one-minute short? Practice, in light-readings, camera set-ups and focus pulling, experience in developing ideas and the very considerable entertainment to be got out of it all. As for subjects, skits on TV commercials may seem promising, but they usually prove to be so bad that interest is quickly dissipated. Better to confront the group with the equipment at the ready, demonstrate one simple camera trick and invite them to weave it into a one-minute anecdote to be thought-up, developed through discussion, scripted, cast, rehearsed and shot in one evening. It's up to the instructor to get home the fact that the idea should be worthy of the trick.

### Fun with Animation

A South London club's *Frolics* shows a game of draughts enlivened by an 8 f.p.s. burst of activity, with birdlike pecks of the players' heads and fingers. The continual turning up of the ace of spades, the "death" card, unnerves a boy who, filmed with the camera upside down, brushes it from floor to table, burns it into newness and, before the final collapse, tears it into a whole one. Animated model Ts show the hazards of getting about in 1912, stop motion plagues a boy with a surfeit of coats and pullovers, and simple editing produces the situation of a terror-stricken boy in an empty room watching a slowly opening door, only to come face to face with himself. The last mentioned idea was thought sufficiently promising to translate into a 15-minute essay in the macabre which comes through despite the poor quality of the ten-year-old-stock.

If the cine enthusiast seeking new fields and new stimuli would pay a visit to his local youth club and offer his services, he'd be abundantly rewarded not only by the gratitude with which the offer of his services would certainly be received but by the knowledge that he is doing a really worthwhile job.



## Bolex B8SL Camera

### ACW TEST REPORTS

THE B8SL\* is the twin-lens turret version of the simplest of the Bolex light-meter cameras for 8mm., the C8SL. It has one running speed (18 f.p.s.), a single-frame release, and a simple optical viewfinder. The turret is designed for the standard D-mount, so that the user has a wide choice of lenses; those supplied with the camera are a 13mm. f/1.9 fixed-focus and a 36mm. f/2.8 focusing telephoto.

**Body.**—Light alloy die castings, with black grained leatherette side panels, and bright metal beading round the edges. The door, hinged at the back and fastened by a central catch, cannot be closed if the gate has been left open. The door catch can be folded flat upwards or downwards to cover either single or double dots marked on the metal underneath, thus showing at a glance whether the first or second run of film is being exposed—a point easily forgotten if the camera has been put away for some time.

Light trapping is by a  $\frac{1}{16}$ -in. deep tongue-and-groove join all round (except where the inner ridge is cut away in two places

to clear the spools); for extra light-tightness, the groove is lined most of the way with black cord.

A standard English ( $\frac{1}{16}$  in. Whit.) tripod bush is located at the front right-hand corner of the base—not, we felt, the ideal position. Apart from making a tripod slightly unbalanced, the off-centre bush causes uneven pressure which could prevent the camera from sitting squarely on a pan-and-tilt platform covered with a resilient material; any resulting tilt could easily be allowed for, of course, but spirit levels built into the panning head would no longer be accurate.

**Gate.**—The front plate is relieved so that the emulsion side of the film is not rubbed in the picture area. The pressure plate behind is not relieved, but its flat surface is highly polished and thus unlikely to mark the base side if kept clean. Both parts of the gate are blackened to prevent halation.

For threading, the gate is opened by pulling a small lever; this allows the pressure plate to swing back under spring tension, withdraws the claw from the film path, and re-sets the footage counter to zero. To close the gate, the lever is pushed forward. The pressure plate can

The twin-turret B8SL, with the normal lens in the taking position below the light meter. Starting button adjoins the name plate; in the same side, above, is the knurled wheel for safety lock, continuous run, etc., and, below, the threaded socket for a cable release. The scale shows the light-meter settings corresponding to film speeds of between 10 and 40 ASA.

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be pulled right out of the camera for cleaning; when that is done, the front plate remains fairly inaccessible, but there is just enough room to clean it and the aperture with a piece of chamois leather or soft cloth wrapped around a match or orange stick.

Sideways positioning of the film in the gate is by an unusual arrangement of fixed and sprung guides. Their combined effect is to give the film a slight diagonal bias which, say Bolex, improves steadiness. In our tests, the performance of the B8SL certainly supported the makers' claim.

**Intermittent.**—A fully retracting claw describes a true D-path motion and engages the film through the back, the perforation used for pull-down being the first below the bottom of the gate (+1). The rotating disc shutter has an opening of 150°, giving an exposure of 1/43 sec. at the 18 f.p.s. taking speed; the inertia of the mechanism increases the single-frame exposure time to about 1/30 sec.

**Film Path.**—Above the gate, a relieved roller on a sprung arm and, below the gate, a rubber-covered post are used to isolate the intermittent movement from the spools. The upper spool spindle is plain, and the lower carries a single dog for take-up. The take-up spool supplied with the camera has four slots in each side, which may present difficulties if one wants to transfer a half-exposed reel from the B8SL to a camera with spindles coded for orthodox spools with three slots in one side and four in the other. Although such occasions are rare, it seems a pity to have departed from established international practice in this respect; moreover, coded spindles would prevent incorrect insertion of a film in the B8SL.

Take-up drive is through a slipping clutch which has its tension set to operate only with the assistance of the claw; after the last perforation has cleared the claw, therefore, the end of the film remains trapped in the gate and cannot spring loose on the spool.

**Footage Counter.**—Driven from the mechanism, this gives readings on a dial marked at every foot and numbered at every 2ft. Travelling past an index mark in a window at the rear of the camera, the dial shows the amount of film exposed and re-sets automatically to the starting position when the camera gate is opened.

The START mark is set at 4ft. from "0" on the counter scale to give the correct length of leader. There is, however, no corresponding mark on the dial for the trailer. Instead, when 25ft. has been exposed, the counter makes a click as a warning that the useful part of the

film is at an end. After ten further clicks, the user knows that all the protective trailer has been run off, but the counter reading remains at "25." A slight disadvantage of this method is that, in surroundings too noisy for the first click to be heard, one could not tell from the reading of "25" whether this point had just been reached or whether part of the scene had already been allowed to run on the trailer, which may be lost in processing. It would be better if the dial continued to advance with the clicks, though this might raise constructional difficulties.

**Motor.**—The spring is wound by a fold-over ratchet-action key which can be turned while the mechanism is running. A full wind of 11 turns transports just under 7ft. of film—a maximum run of 32 seconds—before the mechanism automatically cuts out. When the cut-out operates, the camera stops with the shutter open; this is worth remembering, for there is a risk of fogging spreading to the other "run" of the film, and possibly spoiling the middle of a shot, if the shutter is left open for long with the lens uncapped.

Motor speed is controlled by a centrifugal governor. On the model tested, this was very efficient; the average running speed was exactly the nominal 18-0 f.p.s. during the first 10 seconds of each run, 17-7 f.p.s. during the 10-20 sec. period and 17-3 f.p.s. between 20 and 30 sec.

**Release.**—The mechanism is controlled by a small sliding catch on the front right-hand corner of the body. Associated with it is a serrated disc, placed just above, which is turned to one of the four positions: SECURITY LOCK, SINGLE FRAME (not exposed until the starting catch is released), NORMAL RUN and CONTINUOUS LOCK-ON RUN. Below the release button is a socket for a standard parallel-thread cable release.

**Viewfinder.**—Of the simple optical type, this gives an image of roughly two-thirds life-size. The whole field corresponds to the area included by the standard 13mm. lens, and engraved rectangles show the fields covered by 25mm. and 36mm. lenses. Field adaptors for use with 5-5mm. or 6-5mm. wide-angle lenses are available as extras, as are pairs of parallax-correcting prisms (1ft. and 2ft. or 25cm. and 50cm.), and special eyepieces for those with abnormal sight.

The finder axis is  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. to the right and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. above the lens axis.

**Lenses.**—The swing turret carries two standard D-mounts spaced  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. apart. It is firmly indexed by sprung pins and can be rotated in one direction only (clockwise seen from the front).

The Yvar 13mm. f/1.9 fixed-focus lens

is engraved (in red) with the minimum safe shooting distance for each aperture. The Yvar 36mm. f/2-8 telephoto focuses down to about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  ft.; it is fitted with the Kern patent Visifocus depth-of-field indicator in which orange dots, changing with the aperture in use, indicate the limits of sharp focus on the focusing scale. A depth-of-field table is also supplied.

Both lenses are provided with screwed front cap, and for the 36mm. there is a small leather pouch in which it may be stored when another lens (such as a wide-angle) is fitted on the turret.

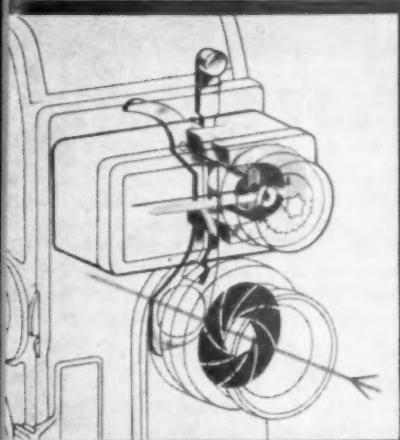
**Exposure Control.**—The unique feature of the Bolex system is that the photo-cell measures the light that will actually fall on the film, so that exposure settings are not influenced by the brightness of objects outside the area included in the picture. Depressing a small lever positions the p.e.c. behind the lens, and in front of the shutter and film, while the measurement is being made. When the release button is operated to start shooting, the cell automatically retracts out of the way.

Exposure is set by matching two needles visible in the viewfinder. One of these, black, is controlled by a galvanometer measuring the light reaching the photo-cell through the taking lens. The other needle, red, is a datum which has to be pre-set according to the speed of the film in use.

The first step in using the control is to consult a table on the front of the camera which assigns numbers from 4 to 10 for film sensitivities of 10-40 ASA (11-17° DIN). The red needle is then set in the appropriate position by rotating a knob on the galvanometer housing until the appropriate film sensitivity number is aligned with (normally) a small black arrow. Once made, this adjustment does not have to be altered until a film of different sensitivity is used (or for some special lenses, to be discussed below).

With the red needle correctly set, there is little more to be done. The camera is aimed at the scene, the lever depressed to position the p.e.c. in front of the film, and the iris ring of the taking lens turned until the black needle covers the red. It is a quick and easy routine, and one of its particular merits is that, the setting being based upon the light that will reach the film, allowance is automatically made for the effect of any filters, etc., fitted to the lens (and, indeed, for the lens cap, which, if left on by mistake, will keep the black needle in its bottom position, no matter how much the aperture ring is turned).

The p.e.c., though behind the lens when a reading is made, is closer to the



*Light-meter section of the B8SL. Behind the iris and aligned with optical axis (arrowed line) is the circular element of the photo-electric cell; it moves upwards automatically, clear of the light path, when shooting begins. Current from the cell goes to the coil (between the horse-shoe magnet) and deflects the black needle in the viewfinder. When the iris is adjusted to line up this needle with the red pointer (grey in the diagram), the correct exposure is set.*

lens than the film. The difference is immaterial with lenses of normal and long focal length, but the marginal rays in the wider cone from a wide-angle lens would result in an incorrect exposure reading. The necessary adjustment is made by shifting the red pointer to a different pre-set position, and this is done by setting the film sensitivity number against a red arrow on the calculator dial, instead of the black arrow used for the normal and tele lens.

Compensation by means of the red arrow is not possible on the B8SL if the film in use is faster than about 20 ASA. For such films, the procedure when using a wide-angle lens is to use the black arrow, align the two needles in the viewfinder with the iris control, and then close down the iris by a further stop before shooting the scene. Indeed, even with 10 ASA films, this method may be preferred to repeated re-adjustments of the galvanometer dial when wide-angle and standard lenses are being used in rapid succession.

A similar dodge makes it possible to use the meter for films faster than 40 ASA—the maximum catered for—with standard lenses. The film speed is first divided by 2, 4 or 8 (whichever brings it to below 40 ASA), the viewfinder needles are aligned, and the iris then closed down by, respectively, one, two or three stops.

For single-frame exposures, the instruc-

tion book recommends setting the index 1½ units higher than for continuous run; alternatively, the lens can be closed down by half a stop over the normal reading.

To check the zeroing of the galvanometer, two triangular marks on the calculator are matched; the red and black needles in the viewfinder should then be aligned when the camera is held level with the lens capped to prevent light from reaching the photo-cell. The zero can be adjusted by turning a small screw just below the lever positioning the cell, but as the galvanometer is a delicate instrument this is perhaps a job better left to the dealer.

One minor limitation of this excellent exposure system is that a reading cannot be made while actually shooting—to compensate, for example, for a cloud in front of the sun or for a pronounced change in scene brightness during the course of a pan.

Again, like all meters which integrate the light from the whole scene, that in the B8SL can give correct readings only for "average" subjects. With such special cases as a figure standing against a background that is predominantly white or predominantly black—the figure requiring the same exposure in both cases for good rendering of flesh tones—one of the usual remedies must be applied, such as taking the reading from close enough to the subject for the background light to be insignificant. Better still is to take the camera so close that the only light entering the cell is that reflected from the subject's face and then, on returning to the shooting position, open the lens by one stop to compensate for the fact that a brighter-than-average scene has been measured. It must be stressed that these departures from normal routine will seldom be required. For the majority of scenes, simple needle matching will give fully acceptable results.

**Instruction Booklet.**—This is comprehensive, well illustrated, and sensibly begins with a brief summary of the instructions for use "If you are impatient to shoot your first film." There are some sound general hints on filming technique. The only fault we could find in an exemplary book was the omission of a depth-of-field scale for various lenses; the loose leaflet included for the telephoto lens could be easily mislaid.

**PERFORMANCE.**—The Bolex B8SL was a pleasant camera to use, both in the hand and on a tripod. A mild complaint must, however, be made of the lens designer for putting the aperture ring at the back of the 13mm. lens and at the front of the telephoto. When groping for it to adjust the meter balance, one too easily handles the wrong ring. With practice, the fingers would no doubt go

to the right place every time, but the camera would be still easier to use if the aperture rings of both lenses were at the front.

The exposure meter produced consistently well-exposed results, failing to do so only on those exceptional scenes where it was obvious that some correction to the indicated exposure would normally be made.

The picture steadiness, tested by superimposed shots of a high-contrast target, was exceptionally good; in fact, few 8mm. cameras reviewed have scored such high marks here as the B8SL. Single-frame exposures were rock-steady, and in continuous-run shots vertical jitter was barely detectable.

The mechanism gets up to speed very quickly—so fast, in fact, that the first frame of each shot is no lighter than its successors. This is not an unmixed blessing, for it makes the start of similar shots harder to find in editing; one obvious remedy is to develop the habit of exposing a single frame with the lens capped between any two shots taken from a single viewpoint.

Viewfinder accuracy was fairly good. A moderate error at the top of frame, and part of the error at the bottom, was due to parallax. A very small amount cut off at the sides was a symmetrical error and of no practical importance.

#### Lenses First Class

Tests of resolving power showed that the 13mm. lens was just a trace soft at full aperture, with definition falling off slightly towards the corners. However, it improved rapidly with only a little stopping down. The 36mm. lens retained good definition and contrast right up to full aperture. With subjects less exacting than our charts, the full-aperture softness of the 13mm. would not be noticeable; on the various pictorial scenes shot during testing, both lenses produced first-class results. The focusing scale of the telephoto was correctly calibrated at all distances checked.

The footage counter was found to be accurate and easy to read; its only weakness, as mentioned earlier, is its failure to show how much of the trailer has been run through the gate. The frame line was correctly positioned to bisect the sprocket hole.

The Bolex B8SL measures 2in. wide by 5in. high by 5in. long over the turret and weighs about 2lb. Price (since April, when it was reduced), £59 19s. 9d. complete with the two lenses. A black leather wrist-strap is 19s. 2d. extra and an ever-ready case £4 7s. 2d. It is a pleasure to recommend a camera with so many good features as this.

Submitted by Cinex Ltd.



*Lido Universal camera, designed for both Classic and Duplex film. The fins were designed to assist steadiness when the camera was used on its side. The 16mm. version, says Centre Sprocket, might well interest experimenters in Half-Sixteen.*

*Projector for half 9·5mm., the Monaco in Monoplex position. For use with Duplex or Classic film, the picture head was rotated so that the spools were in the normal vertical position. But this economical format did not long survive.*

**HALF-SIXTEEN A THREAT to 9·5mm?** This new format proposed in ACW recently offers—like 9·5mm.—a gauge midway between 8 and 16mm.; and as the picture is twice the area of an 8mm. frame, it gives the hope of improved quality at only half 16mm. costs.

As you will no doubt recall, the idea



## The 9·5mm Reel

BY CENTRE SPROCKET

# Another Economy Format?

HOW DOES IT  
COMPARE WITH THE  
MIDDLE GAUGE?

is to mask off one-half of the camera and projector gates, and to run the camera on its side in such a way that successive frames appear alongside one another instead of above and below. The projector, of course, is also run on its side. After processing, the film is slit down the middle, so that the roll yields a double length.

But you will also recall that the Pathescope Monoplex system intro-

duced early in 1955 used exactly the same method with double-perforated 9·5mm. film. The Monaco projector was designed for standard Classic 9·5mm. film, Duplex double-perforated and Monoplex slit film. To enable the last mentioned to be projected, the entire front end of the projector was rotated through 90 degrees to allow for the horizontal travel of the film, and a twin lens turret brought the correct focal length projection lens into place.

Assuming picture area and screen quality to be closely related, it is interesting to compare the size and price of the five formats:

	Picture size	Area (sq. mm.)	Price per minute	
		B. & W.	Colour	
8mm.	4.37mm. × 3.28mm.	14.3	5s. 4d.	6s. 11d.
½ 9·5mm. (Mono)	6·2mm. × 3·8mm.	23·6	4s. 7d.	7s. 11d.*
½ 16mm.	7·21mm. × 4·37mm.	31·6	7s. 11d.	9s. 6d*
9·5mm.	8·2mm. × 6·2mm.	51	9s. 2d.	15s. 10d.
16mm.	9·65mm × 7·21mm.	69·6	15s. 9d.	19s.

\* Estimated.

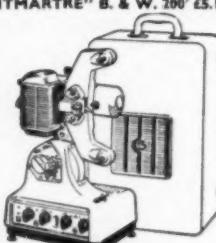
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sound together and then show  
them on the

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HEAR the quality of the sound, your  
own commentary and back-  
ground effects which you add  
to your own film.

### It Costs Much Less on 9·5mm!

Last week I reported that Walton Films, who have been slitting and reperforating their 16mm. films to 9·5mm., are to produce in similar fashion 9·5mm. prints from a number of the 16mm. classics in the British Film Institute library. The first film to be so issued is the famous Buster Keaton comedy, "The General". I have just screened this film to an audience consisting principally of television addicts, and was astonished by the tumultuous response it evoked, though it was competently silent, for I had no time to prepare a record or tape accompaniment. Yet even if I had, I think the laughter might have drowned it.

The hire charge? For 16mm. it is 9s. per reel. For 9·5mm. (i.e., the 16mm. print with sprocket holes at the sides removed) it is only 3s. 6d. a reel. I don't pretend to fathom the economics of this generous gesture, contending myself with pointing that it was represented to the Institute—I leave you to guess by whom—that this was the hire charge that the nine-fiver was accustomed to pay. Clearly this venture merits support! The film—8 reels—is available only from the B.F.I., 81 Dean Street, London, W.I., and though it is a silent picture, should—rather oddly—be projected at 24 f.p.s. not 16 f.p.s. CENTRE SPROCKET.

In this table Half-Sixteen comes midway between 9·5mm. Monoplex and Classic, and on picture quality alone this is certainly where it should be. The Half-Sixteen pictures I have seen were undoubtedly better than 8mm.—but not quite up to 9·5mm. standard. But a big snag was their marked unsteadiness. The pictures were among the most shaky I have come across.

Unfortunately vertical unsteadiness is far more noticeable than horizontal float. Movement *across* the screen is precisely what the eye expects to see, so slight unsteadiness here is normally acceptable. Up-and-down movement, however, is much less familiar, so that unsteadiness in this direction becomes apparent at once.

In the normal projector, vertical movement is a product of the claw mechanism of camera and projector, and lateral of variations of film width. With Half-Sixteen, however, the position is reversed, and it may be that higher standards of slitting would be needed to reduce the vertical unsteadiness. But I must add that it is possible that the jerkiness was contributed to familiar, and therefore awkward, through holding the camera in an unposition.

This problem of handling occupied Pathescope when they produced Monoplex, and they solved it by giv-

ing the Lido camera "wings" top and bottom to help steady it when used on its side. Experimenters with Half-Sixteen will find a camera almost designed for their purpose in the 16mm. version of this camera.

I AM STILL getting letters complaining of the difficulty of obtaining 9·5mm. film. Yet for many months now every dealer has been able to get as much as he wants and I personally know of a number in different parts of the country who have carried a good stock ever since it came back on the market. What is more, dealers in my district who have for years obtained 9·5mm. only to special order, now have a stock on their shelves and a display in their windows. Indeed, I can't think that the user of H or P

(continued on page 160)



Unfamiliar packings—at least to most nine-fivers—the 50ft. spool (left) and 50ft. Webo A magazine. Both are available again, to order.

The advice of the ACW Enquiry Bureau is available free to every reader with a technical problem. Querries are answered by post (we regret we cannot undertake to answer them by telephone) and a small but representative selection is reprinted every week. It will help the Bureau to give a speedy service if querists confine any one letter, whenever possible, to a single problem (or related parts of the same problem) and write on one side of the paper only. Letters should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope and the Query Coupon from the foot of the next page. Address: ACW, 46 Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2.

## Your Problems

### Solved

#### Hiding a Scratch

Through threading it on my projector the wrong way round, I have just caused a bad scratch all down the sprocket side of a film. Unfortunately, it was a friend's film. Can anything be done to make the damage invisible before I give it back?—J.S.P. [Location diplomatically withheld by ACW Enquiry Bureau.]

"Threading the wrong way round" gives us an unpleasant vision of new perforations punched along the picture edge: if this has happened we can suggest only an abject apology, proffered at the same time as some fresh cans of film.

If the damage is confined to scratching, the signs of it can almost certainly be made less evident—and with luck altogether concealed—by the Perma-New treatment, a method of regeneration recently developed by Zonal Film Facilities Ltd., The Tower, Hammersmith Broadway, London, W.6.

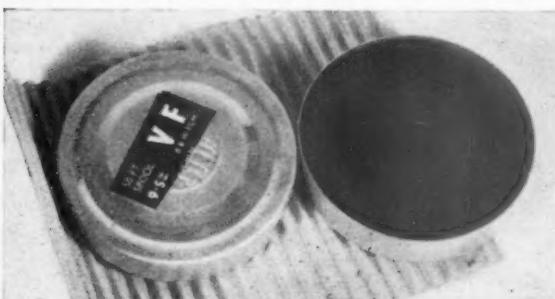
#### Lamps Die Young

Can you explain why I can never get more than seven hours' life from the lamps in my Moviemaster (Model 635)? The projector has been back to the makers for re-testing and they give it a clean bill of health. I keep the motor running until the air coming from the lamphouse is cool and never move the projector until the lamp is quite cold. I always run at the 250v. tapping on 240v. mains.—C.W.J., Carlisle.

This is odd. You are doing all the right things and by under-volting should be getting 20 hours' or more running on average, although this lamp is not as long-lasting as some. If there is in fact nothing wrong with the projector, there seems to be nothing left to blame except the mains supplies: surges of voltage, which do happen in some areas, could account for the short life.

At the risk of offending its makers, we do suggest testing three aspects of the projector yourself, however. Find out:

- (1) If a loose connection in the lamp circuit is causing rapid fluctuations of



lamp voltage (though you would probably notice the flicker if this were so).

(2) If anything is causing excessive motor vibration to reach the lamp cap. (It may be a good idea to switch off the motor immediately after the lamp, leaving the filament to cool without any vibration at all.)

(3) If the 250v. tapping is really under-volting the lamp. There is just a chance that the tappings have been wrongly connected and that by setting to 250v. you are raising instead of lowering the voltage applied to the filament. Check this point by putting an accurate a.c. meter across the terminals. With the meter you can also check for possible surging at the mains socket by keeping your eye glued to the needle, at the time of day you normally project, for one or two very tedious hours.

If the trouble persists, and no fault is found, there seems to be no other course but to try a palliative: one of the lamp-saving devices which, when incorporated in the mains lead, reduce starting surge in the filament.

But we are not satisfied with this reply. It may be that other readers have experienced, and cured, the same apparent fault. If so, it would be helpful if we could have details so that we can make them generally known.

#### Trailer Too Long

*Why does a laboratory splice blank film between the two 25ft. runs, as on the enclosed spool? As a beginner, I would be grateful for comments on my results.—L.M.T., Plymouth.*

It isn't the laboratory. The 40-odd black frames are all on the near side of the centre splice and indicate that you stopped filming about three seconds sooner than you need have done during the first 25ft. run. (See *Running Commentary* in *ACW* of June 29, 1961, for Sound Track's detailed advice on getting full value from every spool you buy.)

Comments on the film generally: you have a good camera; exposures show that you also have a good meter or electric eye (or good luck in judging lighting conditions); and a good sense of what makes a cinematic subject.

On the debit side, you've failed to come close enough to some of the action—next time try to fill the viewfinder with things that an audience will want to see—and you were a little careless in threading. The orange discolouration at the side of the picture at the beginning and end of the 50ft. is edge fogging; on the first loading (not the second) you either had loose turns on the spool or had the camera open too long in too much light.

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#### MAKING A START:

A SERIES FOR BEGINNERS BY H. A. POSTLETHWAITE

## Avoiding Continuity Slips

THOSE WHO COME to cine from still photography are often surprised by the differences. For example, the lens in a cine camera covers a smaller area than the lens in a still camera when both are the same distance from the subject. In cine, there is a lot more depth of field. There is always a horizontal format, so that you can't include the top of a building by turning the camera on its side. The picture must be framed precisely, for there can be no trimming or masking at the enlarger, and you can't redeem exposure errors by after-treatment—not, at any rate, if you're working on colour stock.

But there is another difference, less obvious, but all-important. Cine is concerned not only with the way people and things look, but with what is happening to them. It is a medium for portraying action—not just movement but action leading to some end. Cine depends for its interest not on a single shot but on the way that successive shots or scenes are linked together to form sequences. And if the film is to have coherence and purpose, the sequences in turn must be linked.

#### Shape and Pattern

In a simple family or holiday film this purpose may merely be to record everyday doings. Even so, there is a big difference between recording them as a string of unconnected shots and making them into a film that is an entity, with a recognisable beginning, middle and logical end.

Your aim should be to make each scene link up with the scenes that precede and follow it and to assemble these into sequences of anything from, say, five to fifty scenes. Each of these sequences, and preferably the whole film, should tell some sort of story. The story need not have a definite plot, but it should give a connected account of an incident or experience or adventure.

In other words, the whole film should hang together.

Thinking in terms of sequences and trying to make a film with shape and

pattern is much more interesting than shooting at random. And, while it does introduce opportunities for mistakes, these are of the kind which, as the Irishman might say, can be "rectified in advance."

One such trap is the "two-shot" of two people in conversation. After filming them together, you decide to take a close-up of each. So you film character A (whom we'll suppose to have been on your left in the shot of them together) by having the camera close to character B. Now, for the close-up of B, you take the obvious course of passing behind B to stand by the side of A.

The result: a close-up of A facing towards the right followed by a close-up of B who is also facing towards the right, so that on the screen they appear not to be talking to each other but to be both talking to someone else who cannot be seen. What you should have done was keep on the same side of the pair for both close-ups. To put it another way, if you filmed A over B's left shoulder, you must film B over A's right shoulder.

The same kind of mistake is easily made if a procession is filmed partly from one side of the road and partly from the other side. On the screen, the procession will unaccountably change direction with each change of camera position. Yet another example of reversed movement would arise from filming the landscape from the windows on both sides of a moving train.

Another common slip, when linking one scene with another, comes from forgetting the rule EXIT LEFT. ENTER RIGHT. What this means is that if you are using two scenes to show the progress of a person in the same direction, and if he walks out of the picture in the first scene on the left, then he must enter the second scene on the right. Otherwise he will not seem to be going in the same direction, but to be returning from wherever he went. This could happen in the same way as the two-shot error — by film-

*(continued on page 160)*



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#### NEW CLUB

The first meeting of the Sunbury C.C. will take place on August 30 (7.15 p.m.) at the Club Room, Flower Pot Hotel, Thames Street, Sunbury. Those interested in joining should write for details to A. Bradshaw, 4 Montford Road.

**Film Making—contd. from page 133.** one gives to it. One must learn to think in pictures, to keep in the mind's eye the last shot one took so that the next follows on easily. The technique of camera manipulation must be thoroughly absorbed; the function of close, medium and long shots understood. Then editing will become a pleasure instead of a chore. It would, indeed, be surprising were editing not regarded by the beginner as an irksome task, for the material he takes is rarely susceptible to it.

If one is to get full value from this incomparable hobby one must be prepared to go to some trouble—but it is only a trouble at first. As experience grows, the handling of the cine camera becomes second nature, just as do the operations involved in driving a car; but to the man who will not learn, both can be lethal, for the results achieved by the operator who never gets beyond the beginner stage will in time kill any enthusiasm he may have had.

**It Takes All Sorts—from page 146**  
that the angles they got weren't any good at all.

But, of course, by far the largest group are those determined to learn in the pleasantest possible way at least one or two new tricks, even if they know that it isn't possible to absorb all they have learned or attempted during the week-end. They are the people who make it all worthwhile, especially when you eventually see their names popping up in prize lists or when they write to tell you how much more interesting their film-making has become to their friends as well as to themselves.

#### The 9·5mm. Reel—

chargers would need to make more than a very casual search to satisfy his raw stock needs completely.

Admittedly the position regarding other packs is rather different. The man who uses 50ft. spools may well find a *stockist* hard to come-by, and the Webo magazine user may have even more difficulty. But this does not mean that these packs are at all scarce or difficult to obtain. Cameras using them are comparatively rare, and it is therefore unrealistic to expect a small dealer to keep them in stock, but he can get them from Pathescope at once.

Now may I make one important point? Most firms charge for the loan of the magazines, etc., in which the film is sold. Pathescope—despite the extreme complexity of the Webo magazines—do not; the price of the film remains the same whether it is in the magazine or on a spool, even though the cost of handling, servicing and replacement has increased. (Magazines continue frequently to reach the factory damaged.)

I am sometimes asked why refills for one's own chargers cannot be made available. (Some correspondence about this has already appeared in

*continued from page 157*

*ACW*). I raised this matter with the new company when they began operations and urged them to do something about it. They pointed out that several problems were involved.

Should the customer spoil his film by mishandling when loading his chargers, how was this to be detected? The company might well be blamed for poor processing. Each type of film requires different treatment, but could every customer be relied upon never to mix his stock? Finally, identification of the customer's film and its correct processing depend upon its being returned in its original container and carton, and a new system would have to be devised were unspooled film to be processed.

The simplest way out of these difficulties was to sell the unspooled film without processing rights, and this Pathescope agreed to do. For many months now V.F. and S.X. film has been available in cans of three 9·5mm. rolls. If you do not wish to process them yourself, send them to one of the labs. who advertise in *ACW*, but note that Pathescope can only process film returned in chargers, magazines or on spools, and in its own carton.

#### Avoiding Continuity Slips—*continued from page 158.*

ing first from one side of the path he was taking and then from the other.

Now for that classic error, the "jump cut." Thinking a scene has lasted long enough, you stop the camera; then, after an interval, you continue to film the same scene from the same viewpoint. (Or possibly the motor ran down and you had to stop to rewind.) During the interval, people in the scene will have moved—and even if they have moved very little, the jump in action is upsettingly unnatural to watch.

The way to avoid a jump cut is to change the camera position before you resume filming—a few paces to one side, and closer, would be enough. The way to disguise a jump cut already made is to interpolate a cut-away, bridging the gap with a different but relevant shot. A very common application is the view of the crowd, in a newsreel of a sporting event, between two different stages of the game that had to be filmed from the same camera position.

Typical of another kind of continuity slip is a scene of a boy running by the side of a pond followed

immediately by a shot of him as he struggles in the water, with no explanation of how he got there. A three-seconds close-up between the two scenes, maybe showing a banana skin near the edge, would put matters right.

An accidental break in continuity can also be covered by a cut-away. I once filmed a boy and girl walking out of a garden gate, and followed this by a shot of their emerging into the lane on the other side of the gate. They had carefully closed the gate in the first scene, but the second scene showed the gate left open. By interposing a brief shot of someone watching from a window (actually filmed on another day) the fault was hidden so completely that no audience has noticed it yet.

All of which gives point to the advice offered earlier in this series: take plenty of cut-away shots—onlookers, animals, close-ups, and so forth. You never know when one of them will be just what you need to camouflage an error or fill an involuntary gap.

*Next week: SOME SIMPLE TRICKS.*

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